

MEDIA, PA – Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA-07) celebrated the contributions of Scandinavian Americans to the United States by joining in Leif Ericson Day festivities at Market Square Memorial Park in Marcus Hook on Sunday, October 7, 2007. — "Scandinavian Americans have made significant contributions to many facets of American life and society, best embodied by the spirit of Leif Ericson and his maritime prowess." said Congressman Joe Sestak.

Joe talked about the Scandinavian maritime prowess of ships that sailed around the year 1000 to Vinland in North America, and how that type of leadership is now woven in the fabric of American society through descendants of Scandinavian heritage in our country. Congressman Sestak then spoke about how that type of leadership was demonstrated by the feat of Leif Ericson who helped to expand the maritime security of Iceland.

The Congressman then spoke to about how Scandinavian countries have continued to provide security leadership around the world even today, and gave as a prime example their leadership in environmental security initiatives. These have included the Arctic Military Environmental Co-Operation (AMEC) Program, which began as a Norwegian initiative to combine the efforts of the United States, Norway, and Russia to address environmental problems in the Arctic region associated with Russian nuclear submarine decommissioning; and the Riga Initiative, a forum promoting Baltic Sea Region Defence Environmental Co-Operation (BALTDEC) with the overall goal of sustainable use and development, without hindering military readiness.

"I am proud of the leadership and contributions of Scandinavian countries, whose prowess is woven into the fabric of American life," said Congressman Sestak.

The celebration began with the docking of the replica Viking ship "Norseman" on the Delaware River. The ship was one half the size of the original vessel that brought Leif Ericson to the shores of North America around the year 1000.

On hand to celebrate with Congressman Sestak was honored guest Ambassador Torben Getterman, from the Danish Consulate General in New York, as well as other dignitaries and local representatives.

A luncheon banquet followed, where guests viewed Viking artifacts and learned more about the "Norseman."

This day has been celebrated since 1964, when Congress issued a joint resolution and authorized President Lyndon Johnson to proclaim October 9 "Leif Ericson Day."

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on

Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.